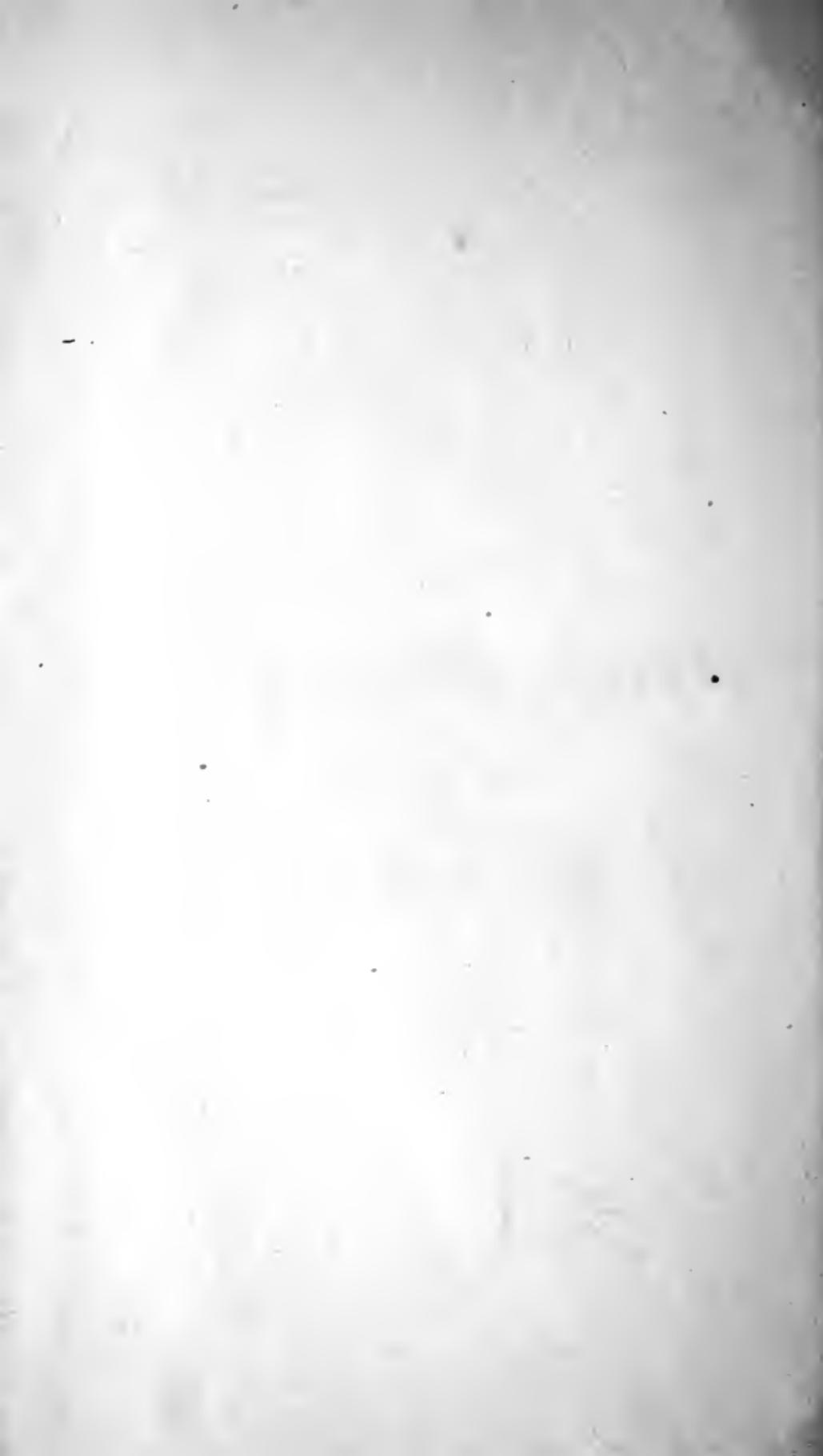




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THE
STRAYED REVELLER,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

LONDON :

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

THE
STRAYED REVELLER,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

By A.

LONDON :
B. FELLOWES, LUDGATE STREET.
1849.



Tr. R.

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4757ST

Ἐ μάκαρ, ὅστις ἔην κείνον χρόνον ἴδρις ἀοιδῆς
Μουσαίων θεράπων, ὅτ' ἀκείρατος ἦν ἔτι λειμών·
νῦν δ', ὅτε πάντα δέδασται, ἔχουσι δὲ πείρατα τέχνηαι,
ἴστατοι ὥστε δρόμου καταλειπόμεθ'—

289179



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SONNET.



Two lessons, Nature, let me learn of thee—
Two lessons that in every wind are blown ;
Two blending duties, harmonis'd in one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity ;
 Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity :
Of labour, that in one short hour outgrows
Man's noisy schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.
Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's weak complainings mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
Their glorious course in silence perfecting ;
Still working, chiding still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

MYCERINUS.*



“ NOT by the justice that my father spurn'd,
Not for the thousands whom my father slew,
Altars unfed and temples overturn'd,
Cold hearts and thankless tongues, where thanks were
 due;

Fell this late voice from lips that cannot lie,
Stern sentence of the Powers of Destiny.

I will unfold my sentence and my crime.
My crime, that, rapt in reverential awe,
I sate obedient, in the fiery prime
Of youth, self-govern'd, at the feet of Law ;
Ennobling this dull pomp, the life of kings,
By contemplation of diviner things.

* Herodotus, II. 133.

My father lov'd injustice, and liv'd long ;
Crown'd with grey hairs he died, and full of sway.
I lov'd the good he scorn'd, and hated wrong :
The Gods declare my recompense to-day.
I look'd for life more lasting, rule more high ;
And when six years are measur'd, lo, I die !

Yet surely, o my people, did I deem
Man's justice from the all-just Gods was given :
A light that from some upper fount did beam,
Some better archetype, whose seat was heaven ;
A light that, shining from the blest abodes,
Did shadow somewhat of the life of Gods.

Mere phantoms of man's self-tormenting heart,
Which on the sweets that woo it dares not feed :
Vain dreams, that quench our pleasures, then depart,
When the dup'd soul, self-master'd, claims its meed :
When, on the strenuous just man, Heaven bestows,
Crown of his struggling life, an unjust close.

Seems it so light a thing then, austere Powers,
To spurn man's common lure, life's pleasant things?
Seems there no joy in dances crown'd with flowers,
Love, free to range, and regal banquettings?
Bend ye on these, indeed, an unmov'd eye,
Not Gods but ghosts, in frozen apathy?

Or is it that some Power, too wise, too strong,
Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile,
Whirls earth, and heaven, and men, and gods along,
Like the broad rushing of the column'd Nile?
And the great powers we serve, themselves may be
Slaves of a tyrannous Necessity?

Or in mid-heaven, perhaps, your golden cars,
Where earthly voice climbs never, wing their flight,
And in wild hunt, through mazy tracts of stars,
Sweep in the sounding stillness of the night?
Or in deaf ease, on thrones of dazzling sheen,
Drinking deep draughts of joy, ye dwell serene?

Oh wherefore cheat our youth, if thus it be,
Of one short joy, one lust, one pleasant dream?
Stringing vain words of powers we cannot see,
Blind divinations of a will supreme;
Lost labour: when the circumambient gloom
But hides, if Gods, Gods careless of our doom?

The rest I give to joy. Even while I speak
My sand runs short; and as yon star-shot ray,
Hemm'd by two banks of cloud, peers pale and weak,
Now, as the barrier closes, dies away;
Even so do past and future intertwine,
Blotting this six years' space, which yet is mine.

Six years—six little years—six drops of time—
Yet suns shall rise, and many moons shall wane,
And old men die, and young men pass their prime,
And languid Pleasure fade and flower again;
And the dull Gods behold, ere these are flown,
Revels more deep, joy keener than their own.

Into the silence of the groves and woods
I will go forth ; but something would I say—
Something—yet what I know not : for the Gods
The doom they pass revoke not, nor delay ;
And prayers, and gifts, and tears, are fruitless all,
And the night waxes, and the shadows fall.

Ye men of Egypt, ye have heard your king.
I go, and I return not. But the will
Of the great Gods is plain ; and ye must bring
Ill deeds, ill passions, zealous to fulfil
Their pleasure, to their feet ; and reap their praise,
The praise of Gods, rich boon ! and length of days.”

—So spake he, half in anger, half in scorn ;
And one loud cry of grief and of amaze
Broke from his sorrowing people : so he spake ;
And turning, left them there ; and with brief pause,
Girt with a throng of revellers, bent his way
To the cool region of the groves he lov'd.

There by the river banks he wander'd on,
From palm-grove on to palm-grove, happy trees,
Their smooth tops shining sunwards, and beneath
Burying their unsunn'd stems in grass and flowers :
Where in one dream the feverish time of Youth
Might fade in slumber, and the feet of Joy
Might wander all day long and never tire :
Here came the king, holding high feast, at morn
Rose-crown'd ; and ever, when the sun went down,
A hundred lamps beam'd in the tranquil gloom,
From tree to tree, all through the twinkling grove,
Revealing all the tumult of the feast,
Flush'd guests, and golden goblets, foam'd with wine ;
While the deep-burnish'd foliage overhead
Splinter'd the silver arrows of the moon.

It may be that sometimes his wondering soul
From the loud joyful laughter of his lips
Might shrink half startled, like a guilty man
Who wrestles with his dream ; as some pale Shape,
Gliding half hidden through the dusky stems,

Would thrust a hand before the lifted bowl,
Whispering, "A little space, and thou art mine."
It may be on that joyless feast his eye
Dwelt with mere outward seeming; he, within,
Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength,
And by that silent knowledge, day by day,
Was calm'd, ennobled, comforted, sustain'd.
It may be; but not less his brow was smooth,
And his clear laugh fled ringing through the gloom,
And his mirth quail'd not at the mild reproof
Sigh'd out by Winter's sad tranquillity;
Nor, pall'd with its own fulness, ebb'd and died
In the rich languor of long summer days;
Nor wither'd, when the palm-tree plumes that roof'd
With their mild dark his grassy banquet-hall,
Bent to the cold winds of the showerless Spring;
No, nor grew dark when Autumn brought the clouds.

So six long years he revell'd, night and day;
And when the mirth wax'd loudest, with dull sound
Sometimes from the grove's centre echoes came,

To tell his wondering people of their king ;
In the still night, across the steaming flats,
Mix'd with the murmur of the moving Nile.

TO A FRIEND.

WHO prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind?
He much, the old man, who, clearest-soul'd of men,
Saw 'The Wide Prospect,* and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus' hill, and Smyrna's bay, though blind.
Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Clear'd Rome of what most sham'd him. But be his
My special thanks, whose even-balanc'd soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
Business could not make dull, nor Passion wild:
Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole:
The mellow glory of the Attic stage;
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

* *Εὐρώπη.*

THE STRAYED REVELLER.



A YOUTH. CIRCE.

THE YOUTH.

FASTER, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul.

Thou standest, smiling
Down on me ; thy right arm
Lean'd up against the column there,
Props thy soft cheek ;

Thy left holds, hanging loosely,
The deep cup, ivy-cinctur'd,
I held but now.

Is it then evening
So soon? I see, the night dews,
Cluster'd in thick beads, dim
The agate brooch-stones
On thy white shoulder.
The cool night-wind, too,
Blows through the portico,
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,
Waves thy white robe.

CIRCE.

Whence art thou, sleeper?

THE YOUTH.

When the white dawn first
Through the rough fir-planks

Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
Up at the valley-head,
Came breaking, Goddess,
I sprang up, I threw round me
 My dappled fawn-skin :
Passing out, from the wet turf,
Where they lay, by the hut door,
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff
 All drench'd in dew:
Came swift down to join
The rout early gather'd
In the town, round the temple,
 Iacchus' white fane
 On yonder hill.

Quick I pass'd, following
The wood-cutters' cart-track
Down the dark valley;—I saw
On my left, through the beeches,
 Thy palace, Goddess,

Smokeless, empty :
Trembling, I enter'd ; beheld
The court all silent,
The lions sleeping ;
On the altar, this bowl.
I drank, Goddess—
And sunk down here, sleeping,
On the steps of thy portico.

CIRCE.

Foolish boy ! Why tremblest thou ?
Thou lovest it, then, my wine ?
Wouldst more of it ? See, how glows,
Through the delicate flush'd marble,
The red creaming liquor,
Strown with dark seeds !
Drink, then ! I chide thee not,
Deny thee not my bowl.
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then—so,—
Drink, drink again !

THE YOUTH.

Thanks, gracious One!
Ah, the sweet fumes again!
More soft, ah me!
More subtle-winding
Than Pan's flute-music.
Faint—faint! Ah me!
Again the sweet sleep.

CIRCE.

Hist! Thou—within there!
Come forth, Ulysses!
Art tired with hunting?
While we range the woodland,
See what the day brings.

ULYSSES.

Ever new magic!
Hast thou then lur'd hither,
Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,
The young, languid-ey'd Ampelus,

Iacchus' darling—
Or some youth belov'd of Pan,
Of Pan and the Nymphs ?
That he sits, bending downward
His white, delicate neck
To the ivy-wreath'd marge
Of thy cup :—the bright, glancing vine-leaves
That crown his hair,
Falling forwards, mingling
With the dark ivy-plants ;
His fawn-skin, half untied,
Smear'd with red wine-stains ? Who is he,
That he sits, overweigh'd
By fumes of wine and sleep,
So late, in thy portico ?
What youth, Goddess,—what guest
Of Gods or mortals ?

CIRCE.

Hist ! he wakes !

I lur'd him not hither, Ulysses.

Nay, ask him !

THE YOUTH.

Who speaks ? Ah ! Who comes forth
To thy side, Goddess, from within ?

How shall I name him ?

This spare, dark-featur'd,

Quick-ey'd stranger ?

Ah ! and I see too

His sailor's bonnet,

His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,

With one arm bare.—

Art thou not he, whom fame

This long time rumours

The favour'd guest of Circe, brought by the waves ?

Art thou he, stranger ?

The wise Ulysses,

Laertes' son ?

ULYSSES.

I am Ulysses.

And thou, too, sleeper ?

Thy voice is sweet.

It may be thou hast follow'd

Through the islands some divine bard,

By age taught many things,

Age and the Muses ;

And heard him delighting

The chiefs and people

In the banquet, and learn'd his songs,

Of Gods and Heroes,

Of war and arts,

And peopled cities

Inland, or built

By the grey sea.—If so, then hail !

I honour and welcome thee.

THE YOUTH.

The Gods are happy.

They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes :
And see, below them,
The Earth, and men.

They see Tiresias
Sitting, staff in hand,
 On the warm, grassy
 Asopus' bank :
His robe drawn over
His old, sightless head :
 Revolving inly
 The doom of Thebes.

They see the Centaurs
In the upper glens
Of Pelion, in the streams,
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools ;
With streaming flanks, and heads

Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind.

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick matted
With large-leav'd, low-creeping melon-plants,
And the dark cucumber.

He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting—drifting :—round him,
Round his green harvest-plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves :
The mountains ring them.

They see the Scythian
On the wide Stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal,
Mares' milk, and bread

Bak'd on the embers :—all around
The boundless waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starr'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
And flag-leav'd iris flowers.
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal : before him, for long miles,
Alive with bright green lizards,
And the springing bustard fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil : here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds
Topp'd with rough-hewn
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
The sunny Waste.

They see the Ferry
On the broad, clay-laden
Lone Chorasmian stream : thereon
With snort and strain,
Two horses, strongly swimming, tow
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes

To either bow
Firm-harness'd by the mane :—a chief,
With shout and shaken spear
Stands at the prow, and guides them : but astern,
The cowering Merchants, in long robes,
Sit pale beside their wealth
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
Of gold and ivory,
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,
Jasper and chalcedony,
And milk-barr'd onyx stones.
The loaded boat swings groaning
In the yellow eddies.
The Gods behold them.

They see the Heroes
Sitting in the dark ship
On the foamless, long-heaving,
Violet sea :
At sunset nearing
The Happy Islands.

These things, Ulysses,
The wise Bards also
Behold and sing.
But oh, what labour !
O Prince, what pain !

They too can see
Tiresias :—but the Gods,
Who give them vision,
Added this law :
That they should bear too
His groping blindness,
His dark foreboding,
His scorn'd white hairs.
Bear Hera's anger
Through a life lengthen'd
To seven ages.

They see the Centaurs
On Pelion :—then they feel,

They too, the maddening wine
Swell their large veins to bursting : in wild pain
They feel the biting spears
Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,
Drive crashing through their bones : they feel
High on a jutting rock in the red stream
Alcmena's dreadful son
Ply his bow :—such a price
The Gods exact for song ;
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian
On his mountain lake :—but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
I' the unkind spring have gnaw'd
Their melon-harvest to the heart : They see
The Scythian :—but long frosts
Parch them in winter-time on the bare Stepp,
Till they too fade like grass : they crawl
Like shadows forth in spring.

They see the Merchants

On the Oxus' stream :—but care

Must visit first them too, and make them pale.

Whether, through whirling sand,

A cloud of desert robber-horse has burst

Upon their caravan : or greedy kings,

In the wall'd cities the way passes through,

Crush'd them with tolls : or fever-airs,

On some great river's marge,

Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes

Near harbour :—but they share

Their lives, and former violent toil, in Thebes,

Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy :

Or where the echoing oars

Of Argo, first,

Startled the unknown Sea.

The old Silenus

Came, lolling in the sunshine,

From the dewy forest coverts,
This way, at noon.

Sitting by me, while his Fauns
Down at the water side
Sprinkled and smooth'd
His drooping garland,
He told me these things.

But I, Ulysses,
Sitting on the warm steps,
Looking over the valley,
All day long, have seen,
Without pain, without labour,
Sometimes a wild-hair'd Mænad ;
Sometimes a Faun with torches ;
And sometimes, for a moment,
Passing through the dark stems
Flowing-rob'd—the belov'd,
The desir'd, the divine,
Belov'd Iacchus.

Ah cool night-wind, tremulous stars !

Ah glimmering water—

Fitful earth-murmur—

Dreaming woods !

Ah golden-hair'd, strangely-smiling Goddess,

And thou, prov'd, much enduring,

Wave-toss'd Wanderer !

Who can stand still ?

Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me.

The cup again !

Faster, faster,

O Circe, Goddess,

Let the wild thronging train,

The bright procession

Of eddying forms,

Sweep through my soul !

FRAGMENT OF AN "ANTIGONE."



THE CHORUS.

WELL hath he done who hath seiz'd happiness.

For little do the all-containing Hours,

Though opulent, freely give.

Who, weighing that life well

Fortune presents unpray'd,

Declines her ministry, and carves his own :

And, justice not infrig'd,

Makes his own welfare his unswerv'd-from law.

He does well too, who keeps that clue the mild

Birth-Goddess and the austere Fates first gave.

For from the day when these

Bring him, a weeping child,

First to the light, and mark
A country for him, kinsfolk, and a home,
Unguided he remains,
Till the Fates come again, alone, with death.

In little companies,
And, our own place once left,
Ignorant where to stand, or whom to avoid,
By city and household group'd, we live: and many
shocks

Our order heaven-ordain'd
Must every day endure.
Voyages, exiles, hates, dissensions, wars.
Besides what waste He makes,
The all-hated, order-breaking,
Without friend, city, or home,
Death, who dissevers all.

Him then I praise, who dares
To self-selected good

Prefer obedience to the primal law,
Which consecrates the ties of blood: for these, indeed,
Are to the Gods a care:
That touches but himself.
For every day man may be link'd and loos'd
With strangers: but the bond
Original, deep-inwound,
Of blood, can he not bind:
Nor, if Fate binds, not bear.

But hush! Hæmon, whom Antigone,
Robbing herself of life in burying,
Against Creon's law, Polynices,
Robs of a lov'd bride; pale, imploring,
Waiting her passage,
Forth from the palace hitherward comes.

HÆMON.

No, no, old men, Creon I curse not.
I weep, Thebans,

One than Creon crueller far.
For he, he, at least, by slaying her,
August laws doth mightily vindicate :
But thou, too-bold, headstrong, pitiless,
Ah me !—honourest more than thy lover,
 O Antigone,
A dead, ignorant, thankless corpse.

THE CHORUS.

Nor was the love untrue
Which the Dawn-Goddess bore
To that fair youth she erst
Leaving the salt sea-beds
And coming flush'd over the stormy frith
Of loud Euripus, saw :
Saw and snatch'd, wild with love,
From the pine-dotted spurs
Of Parnes, where thy waves,
Asopus, gleam rock-hemm'd ;
The Hunter of the Tanagræan Field.

But him, in his sweet prime,
By severance immature,
By Artemis' soft shafts,
She, though a Goddess born,
Saw in the rocky isle of Delos die.
Such end o'ertook that love.
For she desir'd to make
Immortal mortal man,
And blend his happy life,
Far from the Gods, with hers :
To him postponing an eternal law.

HÆMON.

But, like me, she, wroth, complaining,
Succumb'd to the envy of unkind Gods:
And, her beautiful arms unclasping,
Her fair Youth unwillingly gave.

THE CHORUS.

Nor, though enthron'd too high
To fear assault of envious Gods,

His belov'd Argive Seer would Zeus retain
From his appointed end
In this our Thebes : but when

His flying steeds came near
To cross the steep Ismenian glen,
The broad Earth open'd and whelm'd them and him.
And through the void air sang
At large his enemy's spear.

And fain would Zeus have sav'd his tired son
Beholding him where the Two Pillars stand
O'er the sun-redden'd Western Straits :
Or at his work in that dim lower world.

Fain would he have recall'd
The fraudulent oath which bound
To a much feebler wight the heroic man :

But he preferr'd Fate to his strong desire.
Nor did there need less than the burning pile

Under the towering Trachis crags,
And the Spercheius' vale, shaken with groans,
 And the rous'd Maliac gulph,
 And scar'd Cætæan snows,
To achieve his son's deliverance, O my child.

THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA.



HUSSEIN.

O MOST just Vizier, send away
The cloth-merchants, and let them be,
Them and their dues, this day : the King
Is ill at ease, and calls for thee.

THE VIZIER.

O merchants, tarry yet a day
Here in Bokhara : but at noon
To-morrow, come, and ye shall pay
Each fortieth web of cloth to me,
As the law is, and go your way.

O Hussein, lead me to the King.
Thou teller of sweet tales, thine own,

Ferdusi's, and the others', lead.
How is it with my lord ?

HUSSEIN.

Alone,
Ever since prayer-time, he doth wait,
O Vizier, without lying down,
In the great window of the gate,
Looking into the Registàn ;
Where through the sellers' booths the slaves
Are this way bringing the dead man.
O Vizier, here is the King's door.

THE KING.

O Vizier, I may bury him ?

THE VIZIER.

O King, thou know'st, I have been sick
These many days, and heard no thing,
(For Allah shut my ears and mind),
Not even what thou dost, o King.

Wherefore, that I may counsel thee,
Let Hussein, if thou wilt, make haste
To speak in order what hath chanc'd.

THE KING.

O Vizier, be it as thou say'st.

HUSSEIN.

Three days since, at the time of prayer,
A certain Moollah, with his robe
All rent, and dust upon his hair,
Watch'd my lord's coming forth, and push'd
The golden mace-bearers aside,
And fell at the King's feet, and cried,

“Justice, o King, and on myself !
On this great sinner, who hath broke
The law, and by the law must die !
Vengeance, o King !”

But the King spoke :

“What fool is this, that hurts our ears
With folly? or what drunken slave?
My guards, what, prick him with your spears!
Prick me the fellow from the path!”
As the King said, so was it done,
And to the mosque my lord pass'd on.

But on the morrow, when the King
Went forth again, the holy book
Carried before him, as is right,
And through the square his path he took;

My man comes running, fleck'd with blood
From yesterday, and falling down
Cries out most earnestly; “O King,
My lord, o King, do right, I pray!

“How canst thou, ere thou hear, discern
If I speak folly? but a king,
Whether a thing be great or small,
Like Allah, hears and judges all.

“ Wherefore hear thou ! Thou know’st, how fierce
In these last days the sun hath burn’d :
That the green water in the tanks
Is to a putrid puddle turn’d :
And the canal, that from the stream
Of Samarcand is brought this way,
Wastes, and runs thinner every day.

“ Now I at nightfall had gone forth
Alone, and in a darksome place
Under some mulberry trees I found
A little pool : and in brief space
With all the water that was there
I fill’d my pitcher, and stole home
Unseen : and having drink to spare,
I hid the can behind the door,
And went up on the roof to sleep.

“ But in the night, which was with wind
And burning dust, again I creep

Down, having fever, for a drink.

“ Now meanwhile had my brethren found
The water-pitcher, where it stood
Behind the door upon the ground,
And call'd my mother : and they all,
As they were thirsty, and the night
Most sultry, drain'd the pitcher there ;
That they sate with it, in my sight,
Their lips still wet, when I came down.

“ Now mark ! I, being fever'd, sick,
(Most unblest also) at that sight
Brake forth, and curs'd them—dost thou hear ?—
One was my mother——Now, do right !”

But my lord mus'd a space, and said :
“ Send him away, Sirs, and make on.
It is some madman,” the King said :
As the King said, so was it done.

The morrow at the self-same hour
In the King's path, behold, the man,
Not kneeling, sternly fix'd : he stood
Right opposite, and thus began,
Frowning grim down :—"Thou wicked King,
Most deaf where thou shouldst most give ear !
What, must I howl in the next world,
Because thou wilt not listen here ?

"What, wilt thou pray, and get thee grace,
And all grace shall to me be grudg'd ?
Nay but, I swear, from this thy path
I will not stir till I be judg'd."

Then they who stood about the King
Drew close together and conferr'd :
Till that the King stood forth and said,
"Before the priests thou shalt be heard."

But when the Ulema were met
And the thing heard, they doubted not ;

But sentenc'd him, as the law is,
To die by stoning on the spot.

Now the King charg'd us secretly :
" Ston'd must he be, the law stands so :
Yet, if he seek to fly, give way :
Forbid him not, but let him go."

So saying, the King took a stone,
And cast it softly : but the man,
With a great joy upon his face,
Kneel'd down, and cried not, neither ran.

So they, whose lot it was, cast stones ;
That they flew thick, and bruis'd him sore :
But he prais'd Allah with loud voice,
And remain'd kneeling as before.

My lord had covered up his face :
But when one told him, " He is dead,"

Turning him quickly to go in,
"Bring thou to me his corpse," he said.

And truly, while I speak, o King,
I hear the bearers on the stair.
Wilt thou they straightway bring him in ?
—Ho ! enter ye who tarry there !

THE VIZIER.

O King, in this I praise thee not.
Now must I call thy grief not wise.
Is he thy friend, or of thy blood,
To find such favour in thine eyes ?

Nay, were he thine own mother's son,
Still, thou art king, and the Law stands.
It were not meet, the balance swerv'd,
The sword were broken in thy hands.

But being nothing, as he is,
Why for no cause make sad thy face ?

Lo, I am old : three kings, ere thee,
Have I seen reigning in this place.

But who, through all this length of time,
Could bear the burden of his years,
If he for strangers pain'd his heart
Not less than those who merit tears ?

Fathers we *must* have, wife and child ;
And grievous is the grief for these :
This pain alone, which *must* be borne,
Makes the head white, and bows the knees.

But other loads than this his own
One man is not well made to bear.
Besides, to each are his own friends,
To mourn with him, and shew him care.

Look, this is but one single place,
Though it be great : all the earth round,

If a man bear to have it so,
Things which might vex him shall be found.

Upon the northern frontier, where
The watchers of two armies stand
Near one another, many a man,
Seeking a prey unto his hand,

Hath snatch'd a little fair-hair'd slave :
They snatch also, towards Mervè,
The Shiah dogs, who pasture sheep,
And up from thence to Urghendjè.

And these all, labouring for a lord,
Eat not the fruit of their own hands :
Which is the heaviest of all plagues,
To that man's mind, who understands.

The kaffirs also (whom God curse !)
Vex one another, night and day :

There are the lepers, and all sick :
There are the poor, who faint away.

All these have sorrow, and keep still,
Whilst other men make cheer, and sing.
Wilt thou have pity on all these ?
No, nor on this dead dog, o King !

THE KING.

O Vizier, thou art old, I young.
Clear in these things I cannot see.
My head is burning ; and a heat
Is in my skin, which angers me.

But hear ye this, ye sons of men !
They that bear rule, and are obey'd,
Unto a rule more strong than theirs
Are in their turn obedient made.

In vain therefore, with wistful eyes
Gazing up hither, the poor man,

Who loiters by the high-heap'd bootlis,
Below there, in the Registàn,

Says, " Happy he, who lodges there !
With silken raiment, store of rice,
And for this drought, all kinds of fruits,
Grape syrup, squares of colour'd ice,

" With cherries serv'd in drifts of snow."

In vain hath a king power to build
Houses, arcades, enamell'd mosques ;
And to make orchard closes, fill'd

With curious fruit trees, bought from far ;
With cisterns for the winter rain ;
And in the desert, spacious inns
In divers places ;—if that pain

Is not more lighten'd, which he feels,
If his will be not satisfied :

And that it be not, from all time
The Law is planted, to abide.

Thou wert a sinner, thou poor man !
Thou wert athirst ; and didst not see,
That, though we snatch what we desire,
We must not snatch it eagerly.

And I have meat and drink at will,
And rooms of treasures, not a few.
But I am sick, nor heed I these :
And what I would, I cannot do.

Even the great honour which I have,
When I am dead, will soon grow still.
So have I neither joy, nor fame.
But what I can do, that I will.

I have a fretted brick-work tomb
Upon a hill on the right hand,

Hard by a close of apricots,
Upon the road of Samarcand.

Thither, o Vizier, will I bear
This man my pity could not save :
And, tearing up the marble flags,
There lay his body in my grave.

Bring water, nard, and linen rolls.
Wash off all blood, set smooth each limb.
Then say ; “ He was not wholly vile,
Because a king shall bury him.”

SHAKSPEARE.



OTHERS abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask : Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his stedfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the Heaven of Heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality :
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst walk on Earth unguess'd at. Better so !
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

ON HEARING HIM MISAPRAISED.



BECAUSE thou hast believ'd, the wheels of life
Stand never idle, but go always round :
Not by their hands, who vex the patient ground,
Mov'd only ; but by genius, in the strife
Of all its chafing torrents after thaw,
Urg'd ; and to feed whose movement, spinning sand,
The feeble sons of pleasure set their hand :
And, in this vision of the general law,
Hast labour'd with the foremost, hast become
Laborious, persevering, serious, firm ;
For this, thy track, across the fretful foam
Of vehement actions without scope or term,
Call'd History, keeps a splendour : due to wit,
Which saw *one* clue to life, and follow'd it.

WRITTEN IN BUTLER'S SERMONS.



AFFECTIONS, Instincts, Principles, and Powers,
Impulse and Reason, Freedom and Control—
So men, unravelling God's harmonious whole,
Rend in a thousand shreds this life of ours.
Vain labour ! Deep and broad, where none may see,
Spring the foundations of the shadowy throne
Where man's one Nature, queen-like, sits alone,
Centred in a majestic unity.
And rays her powers, like sister islands, seen
Linking their coral arms under the sea :
Or cluster'd peaks, with plunging gulfs between
Spann'd by aërial arches, all of gold ;
Whereo'er the chariot wheels of Life are roll'd
In cloudy circles, to eternity.

WRITTEN IN EMERSON'S ESSAYS.



“ O MONSTROUS, dead, unprofitable world,
That thou canst hear, and hearing, hold thy way.
A voice oracular hath peal'd to-day,
To-day a hero's banner is unfurl'd.
Hast thou no lip for welcome ?” So I said.
Man after man, the world smil'd and pass'd by :
A smile of wistful incredulity
As though one spake of noise unto the dead :
Scornful, and strange, and sorrowful ; and full
Of bitter knowledge. Yet the will is free :
Strong is the Soul, and wise, and beautiful :
The seeds of godlike power are in us still :
Gods are we, Bards, Saints, Heroes, if we will.—
Dumb judges, answer, truth or mockery ?

TO AN INDEPENDENT PREACHER,

WHO PREACHED THAT WE SHOULD BE "IN HARMONY WITH NATURE."



“ IN harmony with Nature ?” Restless fool,
Who with such heat dost preach what were to thee,
When true, the last impossibility ;
To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool :—
Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,
And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.
Nature is cruel ; man is sick of blood :
Nature is stubborn ; man would fain adore :
Nature is fickle ; man hath need of rest :
Nature forgives no debt, and fears no grave ;
Man would be mild, and with safe conscience blest.
Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends ;
Nature and man can never be fast friends.
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave !

TO GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, ESQ.

ON SEEING FOR THE FIRST TIME HIS PICTURE OF "THE BOTTLE,"
IN THE COUNTRY.



ARTIST, whose hand, with horror wing'd, hath torn
From the rank life of towns this leaf : and flung
The prodigy of full-blown crime among
Valleys and men to middle fortune born,
Not innocent, indeed, yet not forlorn :
Say, what shall calm us, when such guests intrude,
Like comets on the heavenly solitude ?
Shall breathless glades, cheer'd by shy Dian's horn,
Cold-bubbling springs, or caves ? Not so ! The Soul
Breasts her own griefs : and, urg'd too fiercely, says :
" Why tremble ? True, the nobleness of man
May be by man effac'd : man can controul
To pain, to death, the bent of his own days.
Know thou the worst. So much, not more, he *can*."

TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND.



GOD knows it, I am with you. If to prize
Those virtues, priz'd and practis'd by too few,
But priz'd, but lov'd, but eminent in you,
Man's fundamental life : if to despise
The barren optimistic sophistries
Of comfortable moles, whom what they do
Teaches the limit of the just and true—
And for such doing have no need of eyes :
If sadness at the long heart-wasting show
Wherein earth's great ones are disquieted :
If thoughts, not idle, while before me flow
The armies of the homeless and unfed :—
If these are yours, if this is what you are,
Then am I yours, and what you feel, I share.

CONTINUED.



YET, when I muse on what life is, I seem
Rather to patience prompted, than that proud
Prospect of hope which France proclaims so loud,
France, fam'd in all great arts, in none supreme.
Seeing this Vale, this Earth, whereon we dream,
Is on all sides o'ershow'd by the high
Uno'erleap'd Mountains of Necessity,
Sparing us narrower margin than we deem.
Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,
When, bursting through the network superpos'd
By selfish occupation—plot and plan,
Lust, avarice, envy—liberated man,
All difference with his fellow man compos'd,
Shall be left standing face to face with God.

RELIGIOUS ISOLATION.

TO THE SAME.



CHILDREN (as such forgive them) have I known,
Ever in their own eager pastime bent
To make the incurious bystander, intent
On his own swarming thoughts, an interest own ;
Too fearful or too fond to play alone.
Do thou, whom light in thine own inmost soul
(Not less thy boast) illuminates, controul
Wishes unworthy of a man full-grown.
What though the holy secret which moulds thee
Moulds not the solid Earth ? though never Winds
Have whisper'd it to the complaining Sea,
Nature's great law, and law of all men's minds ?
To its own impulse every creature stirs :
Live by thy light, and Earth will live by hers.

TO MY FRIENDS,

WHO RIDICULED A TENDER LEAVE-TAKING.



LAUGH, my Friends, and without blame
Lightly quit what lightly came :
Rich to-morrow as to-day
Spend as madly as you may.
I, with little land to stir,
Am the exacter labourer.

Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

But my Youth reminds me—" Thou
Hast liv'd light as these live now :
As these are, thou too wert such :
Much hast had, hast squander'd much."

Fortune's now less frequent heir,
Ah! I husband what's grown rare.
Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

Young, I said: "A face is gone
If too hotly mus'd upon:
And our best impressions are
Those that do themselves repair."
Many a face I then let by,
Ah! is faded utterly.
Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

Marguerite says: "As last year went,
So the coming year 'll be spent:
Some day next year, I shall be,
Entering heedless, kiss'd by thee."
Ah! I hope—yet, once away,
What may chain us, who can say?

Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint that lilac kerchief, bound
Her soft face, her hair around :
Tied under the archest chin
Mockery ever ambush'd in.
Let the fluttering fringes streak
All her pale, sweet-rounded cheek.

Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint that figure's pliant grace
As she towards me lean'd her face,
Half refus'd and half resign'd,
Murmuring, " Art thou still unkind ?"
Many a broken promise then
Was new made—to break again.

Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

Paint those eyes, so blue, so kind,
Eager tell-tales of her mind :
Paint, with their impetuous stress
Of enquiring tenderness,
Those frank eyes, where deep doth lie
An angelic gravity.

Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory !

What, my Friends, these feeble lines
Shew, you say, my love declines ?
To paint ill as I have done,
Proves forgetfulness begun ?
Time's gay minions, pleas'd you see,
Time, your master, governs me.

Pleas'd, you mock the fruitless cry
“ Quick, thy tablets, Memory ! ”

Ah! too true. Time's current strong
Leaves us true to nothing long.

Yet, if little stays with man,
Ah! retain we all we can!
If the clear impression dies,
Ah! the dim remembrance prize!
Ere the parting kiss be dry,
Quick, thy tablets, Memory!

A MODERN SAPPHO.



THEY are gone : all is still : Foolish heart, dost thou
quiver ?

Nothing moves on the lawn but the quick lilac shade.
Far up gleams the house, and beneath flows the river.
Here lean, my head, on this cool balustrade.

Ere he come : ere the boat, by the shining-branch'd
border

Of dark elms come round, dropping down the proud
stream ;

Let me pause, let me strive, in myself find some order,
Ere their boat-music sound, ere their broider'd flags
gleam.

Is it hope makes me linger ? the dim thought, that sorrow
Means parting ? that only in absence lies pain ?

It was well with me once if I saw him : to-morrow
May bring one of the old happy moments again.

Last night we stood earnestly talking together—
She enter'd—that moment his eyes turn'd from me.
Fasten'd on her dark hair and her wreath of white
heather—

As yesterday was, so to-morrow will be.

Their love, let me know, must grow strong and yet
stronger,

Their passion burn more, ere it ceases to burn :

They must love—while they must : But the hearts that
love longer

Are rare : ah ! most loves but flow once, and return.

I shall suffer ; but they will outlive their affection :

I shall weep ; but their love will be cooling : and he,

As he drifts to fatigue, discontent, and dejection,
Will be brought, thou poor heart! how much nearer
to thee!

For cold is his eye to mere beauty, who, breaking
The strong band which beauty around him hath
furl'd,
Disenchanted by habit, and newly awaking,
Looks languidly round on a gloom-buried world.

Through that gloom he will see but a shadow appearing,
Perceive but a voice as I come to his side:
But deeper their voice grows, and nobler their bearing,
Whose youth in the fires of anguish hath died.

Then—to wait. But what notes down the wind,
hark! are driving?
'Tis he! 'tis the boat, shooting round by the trees!
Let my turn, if it will come, be swift in arriving!
Ah! hope cannot long lighten torments like these.

Hast thou yet dealt him, O Life, thy full measure?

World, have thy children yet bow'd at his knee?

Hast thou with myrtle-leaf crown'd him, O Pleasure?

Crown, crown him quickly, and leave him for me.

THE NEW SIRENS.

A PALINODE.



IN the cedar shadow sleeping,
Where cool grass and fragrant glooms
Oft at noon have lur'd me, creeping
From your darken'd palace rooms :
I, who in your train at morning
Stroll'd and sang with joyful mind,
Heard, at evening, sounds of warning ;
Heard the hoarse boughs labour in the wind.

Who are they, o pensive Graces,
—For I dream'd they wore your forms—
Who on shores and sea-wash'd places
Scoop the shelves and fret the storms ?

Who, when ships are that way tending,
Troop across the flushing sands,
To all reefs and narrows wending,
With blown tresses, and with beckoning hands ?

Yet I see, the howling levels
Of the deep are not your lair ;
And your tragic-vaunted revels
Are less lonely than they were.
In a Tyrian galley steering
From the golden springs of dawn,
Troops, like Eastern kings, appearing,
Stream all day through your enchanted lawn.

And we too, from upland valleys,
Where some Muse, with half-curv'd frown,
Leans her ear to your mad sallies
Which the charm'd winds never drown ;
By faint music guided, ranging
The scar'd glens, we wander'd on :

Left our awful laurels hanging,
And came heap'd with myrtles to your throne.

From the dragon-warder'd fountains
Where the springs of knowledge are :
From the watchers on the mountains,
And the bright and morning star :
We are exiles, we are falling,
We have lost them at your call.
O ye false ones, at your calling
Seeking ceiled chambers and a palace hall.

Are the accents of your luring
More melodious than of yore ?
Are those frail forms more enduring
Than the charms Ulysses bore ?
That we sought you with rejoicings
Till at evening we descry
At a pause of Siren voicings
These vexed branches and this howling sky ?

Oh! your pardon. The uncouthness
Of that primal age is gone :
And the skin of dazzling smoothness
Screens not now a heart of stone.
Love has flush'd those cruel faces ;
And your slacken'd arms forego
The delight of fierce embraces :
And those whitening bone-mounds do not grow.

“ Come,” you say ; “ the large appearance
Of man's labour is but vain :
And we plead as firm adherence
Due to pleasure as to pain.”
Pointing to some world-worn creatures,
“ Come,” you murmur with a sigh :
“ Ah! we own diviner features,
Loftier bearing, and a prouder eye.

“ Come,” you say, “ the hours are dreary :
Life is long, and will not fade :

Time is lame, and we grow weary
In this slumbrous cedarn shade.
Round our hearts, with long caresses,
With low sighs hath Silence stole;
And her load of steaming tresses
Weighs, like Ossa, on the aery soul.

“Come,” you say, “the Soul is fainting
Till she search, and learn her own:
And the wisdom of man’s painting
Leaves her riddle half unknown.
Come,” you say, “the brain is seeking,
When the princely heart is dead:
Yet this glean’d, when Gods were speaking,
Rarer secrets than the toiling head.

“Come,” you say, “opinion trembles,
Judgment shifts, convictions go:
Life dries up, the heart dissembles:
Only, what we feel, we know.

Hath your wisdom known emotions?
Will it weep our burning tears?
Hath it drunk of our love-potions
Crowning moments with the weight of years?"

I am dumb. Alas! too soon, all
Man's grave reasons disappear:
Yet, I think, at God's tribunal
Some large answer you shall hear.
But for me, my thoughts are straying
Where at sunrise, through the vines,
On these lawns I saw you playing,
Hanging garlands on the odorous pines.

When your showering locks enwound you,
And your heavenly eyes shone through:
When the pine-boughs yielded round you,
And your brows were starr'd with dew.
And immortal forms to meet you
Down the statued alleys came:

And through golden horns, to greet you,
Blew such music as a God may frame.

Yes—I muse:—And, if the dawning
Into daylight never grew—
If the glistering wings of morning
On the dry noon shook their dew—
If the fits of joy were longer—
Or the day were sooner done—
Or, perhaps, if Hope were stronger—
No weak nursling of an earthly sun . . .

Pluck, pluck cypress, o pale maidens,
Dusk the hall with yew!

But a bound was set to meetings,
And the sombre day dragg'd on:
And the burst of joyful greetings,
And the joyful dawn, were gone:
For the eye was fill'd with gazing,
And on raptures follow calms:—

And those warm locks men were praising
Droop'd, unbraided, on your listless arms.

Storms unsmooth'd your folded valleys,
And made all your cedars frown.
Leaves are whirling in the alleys
Which your lovers wander'd down.
—Sitting cheerless in your bowers,
The hands propping the sunk head,
Do they gall you, the long hours ?
And the hungry thought, that must be fed ?

Is the pleasure that is tasted
Patient of a long review ?
Will the fire joy hath wasted,
Mus'd on, warm the heart anew ?
—Or, are those old thoughts returning,
Guests the dull sense never knew,
Stars, set deep, yet inly burning,
Germs, your untrimm'd Passion overgrew ?

Once, like me, you took your station
Watchers for a purer fire :
But you droop'd in expectation,
And you wearied in desire.
When the first rose flush was steeping
All the frore peak's awful crown,
Shepherds say, they found you sleeping
In a windless valley, further down.

Then you wept, and slowly raising
Your doz'd eyelids, sought again,
Half in doubt, they say, and gazing
Sadly back, the seats of men.
Snatch'd an earthly inspiration
From some transient human Sun,
And proclaim'd your vain ovation
For the mimic raptures you had won.

Pluck, pluck cypress, o pale maidens,
Dusk the hall with yew !

With a sad, majestic motion—
With a stately, slow surprise—
From their earthward-bound devotion
Lifting up your languid eyes :
Would you freeze my louder boldness
Dumbly smiling as you go ?
One faint frown of distant coldness
Flitting fast across each marble brow ?

Do I brighten at your sorrow
O sweet Pleaders ? doth my lot
Find assurance in to-morrow
Of one joy, which you have not ?
O speak once ! and let my sadness,
And this sobbing Phrygian strain,
Sham'd and baffled by your gladness,
Blame the music of your feasts in vain.

Scent, and song, and light, and flowers—
Gust on gust, the hoarse winds blow.

Come, bind up those ringlet showers !
Roses for that dreaming brow !
Come, once more that ancient lightness,
Glancing feet, and eager eyes !
Let your broad lamps flash the brightness
Which the sorrow-stricken day denies !

Through black depths of serried shadows,
Up cold aisles of buried glade ;
In the mist of river meadows
Where the looming kine are laid ;
From your dazzled windows streaming,
From the humming festal room,
Deep and far, a broken gleaming
Reels and shivers on the ruffled gloom.

Where I stand, the grass is glowing :
Doubtless, you are passing fair :

But I hear the north wind blowing ;
And I feel the cold night-air.
Can I look on your sweet faces,
And your proud heads backward thrown,
From this dusk of leaf-strewn places
With the dumb woods and the night alone ?

But, indeed, this flux of guesses—
Mad delight, and frozen calms—
Mirth to-day and vine-bound tresses,
And to-morrow—folded palms—
Is this all ? this balanc'd measure ?
Could life run no easier way ?
Happy, at the noon of pleasure,
Passive, at the midnight of dismay ?

But, indeed, this proud possession—
This far-reaching magic chain,
Linking in a mad succession .
Fits of joy and fits of pain :

Have you seen it at the closing ?
Have you track'd its clouded ways ?
Can your eyes, while fools are dozing,
Drop, with mine, adown life's latter days ?

When a dreary light is wading
Through this waste of sunless greens—
When the flashing lights are fading
On the peerless cheek of queens—
When the mean shall no more sorrow,
And the proudest no more smile—
While the dawning of the morrow
Widens slowly westward all that while ?

Then, when change itself is over,
When the slow tide sets one way,
Shall you find the radiant lover,
Even by moments, of to-day ?
The eye wanders, faith is failing :
O, loose hands, and let it be !

Proudly, like a king bewailing,
O, let fall one tear, and set us free !

All true speech and large avowal
Which the jealous soul concedes :
All man's heart—which brooks bestowal :
All frank faith—which passion breeds :
These we had, and we gave truly :
Doubt not, what we had, we gave :
False we were not, nor unruly :
Lodgers in the forest and the cave.

Long we wander'd with you, feeding
Our sad souls on your replies :
In a wistful silence reading
All the meaning of your eyes :
By moss-border'd statues sitting,
By well-heads, in summer days.
But we turn, our eyes are flitting.
See, the white east, and the morning rays !

And you too, o weeping Graces,
Sylvan Gods of this fair shade !
Is there doubt on divine faces ?
Are the happy Gods dismay'd ?
Can men worship the wan features,
The sunk eyes, the wailing tone,
Of unspher'd discrowned creatures,
Souls as little godlike as their own ?

Come, loose hands ! The winged fleetness
Of immortal feet is gone.
And your scents have shed their sweetness,
And your flowers are overblown.
And your jewell'd gauds surrender
Half their glories to the day :
Freely did they flash their splendour,
Freely gave it—but it dies away.

In the pines the thrush is waking—
Lo, yon orient hill in flames :

Scores of true love knots are breaking
At divorce which it proclaims.

When the lamps are pal'd at morning,
Heart quits heart, and hand quits hand.

—Cold in that unlovely dawning,
Loveless, rayless, joyless you shall stand.

Strew no more red roses, maidens,
Leave the lilies in their dew :
Pluck, pluck cypress, o pale maidens !
Dusk, o dusk the hall with yew !

—Shall I seek, that I may scorn her,
Her I lov'd at eventide ?
Shall I ask, what faded mourner
Stands, at daybreak, weeping by my side ?
Pluck, pluck cypress, o pale maidens !
Dusk the hall with yew !

THE VOICE.



As the kindling glances,
Queen-like and clear,
Which the bright moon lances
From her tranquil sphere
At the sleepless waters
Of a lonely mere,
On the wild whirling waves, mournfully, mournfully,
Shiver and die.

As the tears of sorrow
Mothers have shed—
Prayers that to-morrow
Shall in vain be sped

When the flower they flow for
Lies frozen and dead—
Fall on the throbbing brow, fall on the burning breast,
Bringing no rest.

Like bright waves that fall
With a lifelike motion
On the lifeless margin of the sparkling Ocean.
A wild rose climbing up a mould'ring wall—
A gush of sunbeams through a ruin'd hall—
Strains of glad music at a funeral:—
So sad, and with so wild a start
To this long sober'd heart,
So anxiously and painfully,
So drearily and doubtfully,
And, oh, with such intolerable change
Of thought, such contrast strange,
O unforgotten Voice, thy whispers come,
Like wanderers from the world's extremity,
Unto their ancient home.

In vain, all, all in vain,
They beat upon mine ear again,
Those melancholy tones so sweet and still.
Those lute-like tones which in long distant years
 Did steal into mine ears :
Blew such a thrilling summons to my will ;
 Yet could not shake it.
Drain'd all the life my full heart had to spill ;
 Yet could not break it.

TO FAUSTA.



Joy comes and goes : hope ebbs and flows,

Like the wave.

Change doth unknit the tranquil strength of men.

Love lends life a little grace,

A few sad smiles : and then,

Both are laid in one cold place,

In the grave.

Dreams dawn and fly : friends smile and die,

Like spring flowers.

Our vaunted life is one long funeral.

Men dig graves, with bitter tears,

For their dead hopes ; and all,

Maz'd with doubts, and sick with fears,

Count the hours.

We count the hours : these dreams of ours,
False and hollow,
Shall we go hence and find they are not dead ?
Joys we dimly apprehend,
Faces that smil'd and fled,
Hopes born here, and born to end,
Shall we follow ?

STAGYRUS.



THOU, who dost dwell alone—
Thou, who dost know thine own—
Thou, to whom all are known
From the cradle to the grave—

Save, oh, save.

From the world's temptations,

From tribulations ;

From that fierce anguish

Wherein we languish ;

From that torpor deep

Wherein we lie asleep,

Heavy as death, cold as the grave ;

Save, oh, save.

When the Soul, growing clearer,
Sees God no nearer :
When the Soul, mounting higher,
To God comes no nigher :
But the arch-fiend Pride
Mounts at her side,
Foiling her high emprise,
Sealing her eagle eyes,
And, when she fain would soar,
Makes idols to adore ;
Changing the pure emotion
Of her high devotion,
To a skin-deep sense
Of her own eloquence :
Strong to deceive, strong to enslave—
Save, oh, save.

From the ingrain'd fashion
Of this earthly nature

That mars thy creature.

From grief, that is but passion ;

From mirth, that is but feigning ;

From tears, that bring no healing ;

From wild and weak complaining ;

Thine old strength revealing,

Save, oh, save.

From doubt, where all is double :

Where wise men are not strong :

Where comfort turns to trouble :

Where just men suffer wrong.

Where sorrow treads on joy :

Where sweet things soonest cloy :

Where faiths are built on dust :

Where Love is half mistrust,

Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea ;

Oh, set us free.

O let the false dream fly

Where our sick souls do lie

Tossing continually.

O where thy voice doth come

Let all doubts be dumb :

Let all words be mild :

All strifes be reconcil'd :

All pains beguil'd.

Light bring no blindness ;

Love no unkindness ;

Knowledge no ruin ;

Fear no undoing.

From the cradle to the grave,

Save, oh, save.

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE,

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN.



Who taught this pleading to unpractis'd eyes ?
Who hid such import in an infant's gloom ?
Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise ?
Who mass'd, round that slight brow, these clouds of doom ?

Lo ! sails that gleam a moment and are gone ;
The swinging waters, and the cluster'd pier.
Not idly Earth and Ocean labour on,
Nor idly do these sea-birds hover near.

But thou, whom superfluity of joy
Wafts not from thine own thoughts, nor longings vain,
Nor weariness, the full-fed soul's annoy ;
Remaining in thy hunger and thy pain :

Thou, drugging pain by patience ; half averse
From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee ;
With eyes that sought thine eyes thou didst converse,
And that soul-searching vision fell on me.

Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known :
Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth.
Thy sorrow and thy calmness are thine own :
Glooms that enhance and glorify this earth.

What mood wears like complexion to thy woe ?
His, who in mountain glens, at noon of day,
Sits rapt, and hears the battle break below ?
Ah ! thine was not the shelter, but the fray.

What exile's, changing bitter thoughts with glad ?
What seraph's, in some alien planet born ?
No exile's dream was ever half so sad,
Nor any angel's sorrow so forlorn.

Is the calm thine of stoic souls, who weigh
Life well, and find it wanting, nor deplore :
But in disdainful silence turn away,
Stand mute, self-centred, stern, and dream no more ?

Or do I wait, to hear some grey-hair'd king
Unravel all his many-colour'd lore :
Whose mind hath known all arts of governing,
Mus'd much, lov'd life a little, loath'd it more ?

Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,
Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give ——
Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope,
Foreseen thy harvest—yet proceed'st to live.

O meek anticipant of that sure pain
Whose sureness grey-hair'd scholars hardly learn !
What wonder shall time breed, to swell thy strain ?
What heavens, what earth, what suns shalt thou
discern ?

Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star,
Match that funereal aspect with her pall,
I think, thou wilt have fathom'd life too far,
Have known too much——or else forgotten all.

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil
Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps :
Hath sown, with cloudless passages, the tale
Of grief, and eas'd us with a thousand sleeps.

Ah ! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,
Not daily labour's dull, Lethæan spring,
Oblivion in lost angels can infuse
Of the soil'd glory, and the trailing wing.

And though thou glean, what strenuous gleaners may,
In the throng'd fields where winning comes by
strife ;

And though the just sun gild, as all men pray,
Some reaches of thy storm-vest stream of life :

Though that blank sunshine blind thee : though the
cloud

That sever'd the world's march and thine, is gone :
Though ease dulls grace, and Wisdom be too proud
To halve a lodging that was all her own :

Once, ere the day decline, thou shalt discern,
Oh once, ere night, in thy success, thy chain.
Ere the long evening close, thou shalt return,
And wear this majesty of grief again.

THE HAYSWATER BOAT.



A REGION desolate and wild.
Black, chafing water : and afloat,
And lonely as a truant child
In a waste wood, a single boat :
No mast, no sails are set thereon ;
It moves, but never moveth on :
And welters like a human thing
Amid the wild waves weltering.

Behind, a buried vale doth sleep,
Far down the torrent cleaves its way :
In front the dumb rock rises steep,
A fretted wall of blue and grey ;

Of shooting cliff and crumbled stone
With many a wild weed overgrown :
All else, black water : and afloat,
One rood from shore, that single boat.

Last night the wind was up and strong ;
The grey-streak'd waters labour still :
The strong blast brought a pigmy throng
From that mild hollow in the hill ;
From those twin brooks, that beached strand
So featly strewn with drifted sand ;
From those weird domes of mounded green
That spot the solitary scene.

This boat they found against the shore :
The glossy rushes nodded by.
One rood from land they push'd, no more ;
Then rested, listening silently.
The loud rains lash'd the mountain's crown,
The grating shingle straggled down :

All night they sate ; then stole away,
And left it rocking in the bay.

Last night ?—I look'd, the sky was clear.
The boat was old, a batter'd boat.
In sooth, it seems a hundred year
Since that strange crew did ride afloat.
The boat hath drifted in the bay—
The oars have moulder'd as they lay—
The rudder swings—yet none doth steer.
What living hand hath brought it here ?

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.



COME, dear children, let us away ;

Down and away below.

Now my brothers call from the bay ;

Now the great winds shorewards blow ;

Now the salt tides seawards flow ;

Now the wild white horses play,

Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.

Children dear, let us away.

This way, this way.

Call her once before you go.

Call once yet.

In a voice that she will know :

“ Margaret ! Margaret ! ”

Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear :
Children's voices, wild with pain.

Surely she will come again.
Call her once and come away.

This way, this way.
"Mother dear, we cannot stay."
The wild white horses foam and fret.
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down.

Call no more.

One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore.

Then come down.

She will not come though you call all day.

Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday

We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?

In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts rang'd all round
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?

When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,

On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.

She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea.
She said; "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!

And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."

I said; "Go up, dear heart, through the waves.
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves."

She smil'd, she went up through the surf in the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?

"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town.

Through the narrow pav'd streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climb'd on the graves, on the stones, worn with rains,
And we gaz'd up the aisle through the small leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar ; we saw her clear :

“ Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here.

Dear heart,” I said, “ we are long alone.

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.”

But, ah, she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book.

“ Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.”

Come away, children, call no more.

Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down.

Down to the depths of the sea.

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark, what she sings; "O joy, o joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy.
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.

For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun."

And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window, and looks at the sand;

And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh.

For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaid,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children.
Come children, come down.
The salt tide rolls seaward.
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, " Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she.
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow ;

When clear falls the moonlight ;
When spring-tides are low :
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom ;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom :
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie ;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town ;
At the church on the hill-side—
 And then come back down.
Singing, “ There dwells a lov'd one,
But cruel is she.
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea.”

THE WORLD AND THE QUIETIST.

TO CRITIAS.



“ WHY, when the World’s great mind
Hath finally inclin’d,
Why,” you say, Critias, “ be debating still ?
Why, with these mournful rhymes
Learn’d in more languid climes,
Blame our activity,
Who, with such passionate will,
Are, what we mean to be ?”

Critias, long since, I know,
(For Fate decreed it so),
Long since the World hath set its heart to live.
Long since, with credulous zeal
It turns Life’s mighty wheel.
Still doth for labourers send.

Who still their labour give.
And still expects an end.

Yet, as the wheel flies round,
With no ungrateful sound
Do adverse voices fall on the World's ear.
Deafen'd by his own stir
The rugged Labourer
Caught not till then a sense
So glowing and so near
Of his omnipotence.

So, when the feast grew loud
In Susa's palace proud,
A white-rob'd slave stole to the Monarch's side.
He spoke : the Monarch heard :
Felt the slow-rolling word
Swell his attentive soul.
Breath'd deeply as it died,
And drain'd his mighty bowl.

IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS.

If, in the silent mind of One all-pure
At first imagin'd lay
The sacred world ; and by procession sure
From those still deeps, in form and colour drest,
Seasons alternating, and night and day,
The long-mus'd thought to north south east and west
Took then its all-seen way :

O waking on a world which thus-wise springs !
Whether it needs thee count
Betwixt thy waking and the birth of things
Ages or hours : o waking on Life's stream !
By lonely pureness to the all-pure Fount
(Only by this thou canst) the colour'd dream
Of Life remount.

Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow ;
 And faint the city gleams ;
Rare the lone pastoral huts : marvel not thou !
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams :
Alone the sun arises, and alone
 Spring the great streams.

But, if the wild unfather'd mass no birth
 In divine seats hath known :
In the blank, echoing solitude, if Earth,
Rocking her obscure body to and fro,
Ceases not from all time to heave and groan,
Unfruitful oft, and, at her happiest throe,
 Forms, what she forms, alone :

O seeming sole to awake, thy sun-bath'd head
 Piercing the solemn cloud
Round thy still dreaming brother-world outspread !

O man, whom Earth, thy long-vev't mother, bare
Not without joy ; so radiant, so endow'd—
(Such happy issue crown'd her painful care)

Be not too proud !

O when most self-exalted most alone,
Chief dreamer, own thy dream !
Thy brother-world stirs at thy feet unknown ;
Who hath a monarch's hath no brother's part ;
Yet doth thine inmost soul with yearning teem.
O what a spasm shakes the dreamer's heart——

“I too but seem !”

RESIGNATION.

TO FAUSTA.



“ To die be given us, or attain !
Fierce work it were, to do again.”
So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, pray’d
At burning noon : so warriors said,
Scarf’d with the cross, who watch’d the miles
Of dust that wreath’d their struggling files
Down Lydian mountains : so, when snows
Round Alpine summits eddying rose,
The Goth, bound Rome-wards : so the Hun,
Crouch’d on his saddle, when the sun
Went lurid down o’er flooded plains
Through which the groaning Danube strains
To the drear Euxine : so pray all,
Whom labours, self-ordain’d, enthrall ;

Because they to themselves propose
On this side the all-common close
A goal which, gain'd, may give repose.
So pray they : and to stand again
Where they stood once, to them were pain ;
Pain to thread back and to renew
Past straits, and currents long steer'd through.

But milder natures, and more free ;
Whom an unblam'd serenity
Hath freed from passions, and the state
Of struggle these necessitate ;
Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
Hath made, or birth hath found, resign'd ;
These mourn not, that their goings pay
Obedience to the passing day.
These claim not every laughing Hour
For handmaid to their striding power ;
Each in her turn, with torch uprear'd,
To await their march ; and when appear'd,

Through the cold gloom, with measur'd race,
To usher for a destin'd space,
(Her own sweet errands all foregone)
The too imperious Traveller on.
These, Fausta, ask not this: nor thou,
Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now.

We left, just ten years since, you say,
That wayside inn we left to-day :
Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
Shouts greeting from his easy chair ;
High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands ;
Makes clear our goal to every eye,
The valley's western boundary.
A gate swings to : our tide hath flow'd
Already from the silent road.
The valley pastures, one by one,
Are threaded, quiet in the sun :
And now beyond the rude stone bridge
Slopes gracious up the western ridge.

Its woody border, and the last
Of its dark upland farms is past :
Lone farms, with open-lying stores,
Under their burnish'd sycamores.
All past : and through the trees we glide
Emerging on the green hill-side.
There climbing hangs, a far-seen sign,
Our wavering, many-colour'd line ;
There winds, upstreaming slowly still
Over the summit of the hill.
And now, in front, behold outspread
Those upper regions we must tread ;
Mild hollows, and clear heathy swells,
The cheerful silence of the fells.
Some two hours' march, with serious air,
Through the deep noontide heats we fare :
The red-grouse, springing at our sound,
Skims, now and then, the shining ground ;
No life, save his and ours, intrudes
Upon these breathless solitudes.

O joy ! again the farms appear ;
Cool shade is there, and rustic cheer :
There springs the brook will guide us down,
Bright comrade, to the noisy town.
Lingering, we follow down : we gain
The town, the highway, and the plain.
And many a mile of dusty way,
Parch'd and road-worn, we made that day ;
But, Fausta, I remember well
That, as the balmy darkness fell,
We bath'd our hands, with speechless glee,
That night, in the wide-glimmering Sea.

Once more we tread this self-same road,
Fausta, which ten years since we trod :
Alone we tread it, you and I ;
Ghosts of that boisterous company.
Here, where the brook shines, near its head,
In its clear, shallow, turf-fring'd bed ;
Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
Capp'd with faint smoke, the noisy town ;

Here sit we, and again unroll,
Though slowly, the familiar whole.
The solemn wastes of heathy hill
Sleep in the July sunshine still :
The self-same shadows now, as then,
Play through this grassy upland glen :
The loose dark stones on the green way
Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay :
On this mild bank above the stream,
(You crush them) the blue gentians gleam.
Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
The sailing foam, the shining pool.—
These are not chang'd: and we, you say,
Are scarce more chang'd, in truth, than they.

The Gipsies, whom we met below,
They too have long roam'd to and fro.
They ramble, leaving, where they pass,
Their fragments on the cumber'd grass.
And often to some kindly place
Chance guides the migratory race

Where, though long wanderings intervene,
They recognise a former scene.

The dingy tents are pitch'd: the fires
Give to the wind their wavering spires ;
In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
Their children, as when first they came ;
They see their shackled beasts again
Move, browsing, up the grey-wall'd lane.
Signs are not wanting, which might raise
The ghosts in them of former days :
Signs are not wanting, if they would ;
Suggestions to disquietude.

For them, for all, Time's busy touch,
While it mends little, troubles much :
Their joints grow stiffer ; but the year
Runs his old round of dubious cheer :
Chilly they grow ; yet winds in March,
Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch :
They must live still ; and yet, God knows,
Crowded and keen the country grows :

It seems as if, in their decay,
The Law grew stronger every day.
So might they reason ; so compare,
Fausta, times past with times that are.
But no :—they rubb'd through yesterday
In their hereditary way ;
And they will rub through, if they can,
To-morrow on the self-same plan ;
Till death arrives to supersede,
For them, vicissitude and need.

The Poet, to whose mighty heart !
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of Man.
Though he move mountains ; though his day
Be pass'd on the proud heights of sway ;
Though he hath loos'd a thousand chains ;
Though he hath borne immortal pains ;
Action and suffering though he know ;
—He hath not liv'd, if he lives so.

He sees, in some great-historied land,
A ruler of the people stand ;
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude ;
Exults : yet for no moment's space
Enviest the all-regarded place.
Beautiful eyes meet his ; and he
Bears to admire uncravingly :
They pass ; he, mingled with the crowd,
Is in their far-off triumphs proud.
From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town ;
Surveys each happy group that fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets ;
Each with some errand of its own ;—
And does not say, "I am alone."
He sees the gentle stir of birth
When Morning purifies the earth ;
He leans upon a gate, and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees.

Low woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round ;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answer'd from the depth of dawn ;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drench'd, half-shut roses gleam :
But where the further side slopes down
He sees the drowsy new-wak'd clown
In his white quaint-embroider'd frock
Make, whistling, towards his mist-wreath'd flock ;
Slowly, behind the heavy tread,
The wet flower'd grass heaves up its head.—
Lean'd on his gate, he gazes : tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years :
Before him he sees Life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole ;
That general Life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace ;
That Life, whose dumb wish is not miss'd

If birth proceeds, if things subsist :
The Life of plants, and stones, and rain :
The Life he craves ; if not in vain
Fate gave, what Chance shall not controul,
His sad lucidity of soul.

You listen :—but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while.
Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Wash'd, eddying, from this bank, their home.
“ Those Gipsies,” so your thoughts I scan,
“ Are less, the Poet more, than man.
They feel not, though they move and see :
Deeply the Poet feels ; but he
Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
Where Orpheus and where Homer are.
In the day's life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound.
He escapes thence, but we abide.
Not deep the Poet sees, but wide.”

The World in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love.
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy :—and were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismay'd,
Beyond his passion's widest range
Far regions of eternal change.
Nay, and since death, which wipes out man,
Finds him with many an unsolv'd plan,
With much unknown, and much untried,
Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
Still gazing on the ever full
Eternal mundane spectacle ;
This World in which we draw our breath,
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death.

Blame thou not therefore him, who dares
Judge vain beforehand human cares.
Whose natural insight can discern
What through experience others learn.

Who needs not love and power, to know
Love transient, power an unreal show.
Who treads at ease life's uncheer'd ways :—
Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise.
Rather thyself for some aim pray
Nobler than this—to fill the day.
Rather, that heart, which burns in thee,
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free.
Be passionate hopes not ill resign'd
For quiet, and a fearless mind.
And though Fate grudge to thee and me
The Poet's rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from Chance, have conquer'd Fate.
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men's business not too near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homewards to the general Life.
Like leaves by suns not yet uncurl'd :
To the wise, foolish ; to the world,

Weak : yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
Each moment as it flies, to whom,
Crowd as we will its neutral room,
Is but a quiet watershed

Whence, equally, the Seas of Life and Death are fed.

Enough, we live :—and if a life,
With large results so little rife,
Though bearable, seem hardly worth
This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth ;
Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,
The solemn hills around us spread,
This stream that falls incessantly,
The strange-scrawl'd rocks, the lonely sky,
If I might lend their life a voice,
Seem to bear rather than rejoice.
And even could the intemperate prayer
Man iterates, while these forbear,
For movement, for an ampler sphere,
Pierce Fate's impenetrable ear ;

Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action's dizzying eddy whirl'd,
The something that infects the world.

THE END.







